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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to evaluate the self-esteem of adolescent girls participating in a new, optional pilot course entitled "Enabling Visions." The study examined whether involvement in the mentoring self-esteem course had a positive impact on the participants' self-esteem, increased their awareness of women's issues, and resulted in their selection of specific proactive strategies enabling them to get their learning needs met in the classroom. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative measures and involved 21 girls who self-selected to be in the course (treatment group) and 20 girls selected by the school administration who served as the control group. Both groups completed the Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory prior to and on completion of the course instruction. Treatment group members were interviewed before and after treatment. Findings from the first stage of this ongoing study is limited to the background efforts resulting in the optional course offering and the pre-test or initial interview data from the treatment group. Early findings suggest that raising the awareness of women's issues with adults who work with young women is critical to improving the self-esteem of girls and to addressing girls' needs in the classroom. (NB)

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ENABLING VISIONS: SELF ESTEEM OF JUNIOR-HIGH GIRLS

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Introduction

Girls are under high psychological risk during adolescence. They "have been noted to lose their vitality, their resilience, their immunity to depression, their sense of themselves and their character" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 2). Many scholars connect psychological risks to differences in male and female socialization (Hutton, 1992). For example, Sadker & Sadker (1986) observed students over various age ranges, from elementary to college, in their study of sexism in classrooms. They found that teachers directed their attention inequitably with boys getting the majority of the higher quality feedback at the expense of girls in the classroom Boys receive significantly higher proportions of praise, criticism and remediation. Boys demand and get more teacher attention.

Psychological risk is clearly documented in research. As evidence mounts (Gilligan, 1992; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Robertson, 1992; Shuster, 1992) that young girls' self assurance decreases in the adolescent years this problem has become the focus of many recent reports and subsequent recommendations. For example, The American Association of University Women's (AAUW) report (1990), resulting from a national survey to study the self-esteem, education and career aspirations in adolescent girls and boys in today's society, stated that adolescence is a difficult time for both girls and boys. This report noted that although as

girls and boys grow older, both experience a significant loss of self-esteem in a variety of areas, the loss is most dramatic and has the most long term effect for girls. Specifically, the AAUW report noted that a gender gap in self-esteem increases with age. That is, between elementary and high school, a majority of boys retain high levels of self-esteem where as girls' self-esteem falls "31 percentage points" (pg. 4) during this time. This decline in self-esteem results in girls' lack of confidence in their abilities and a general sense of worth that is more dependent upon appearance than on ability; the reverse is found for boys. With self-esteem critically related to career aspirations, the lower self-esteem of girls puts them at a disadvantage for future careers as they begin with lower hopes for their future and are less confident in their talents and abilities.

What can be done to enhance the self-esteem of young girls? Again, findings of the AAUW report (1990) are helpful. Family and school, not peers as is commonly noted in popular literature, have the greatest impact on adolescents' self-esteem and aspirations. Adults make a significant difference. As adolescents find people believing in them they believe in themselves. Sadly, many young women find people, including their teachers, believing that females cannot do the things they believe they can. The result is one cause of girls' low self-esteem. Academic

self-esteem was found to be the most important aspect of self-esteem for elementary girls. Thus, teachers have a special opportunity to affect the self-esteem of their female students by instilling confidence which will assist in shaping interests and aspirations.

Aburdene and Naisbitt (1992) recommended that women become sources of validation for their young female counterparts by accepting responsibility for mentoring young women. Mentoring has been noted as an effective strategy for increasing women's self-esteem and opportunities in the workplace (Rowe, 1981; Swhartz, 1992). Schwartz (1992) noted that while it is difficult to institutionalize mentoring programs, it has been done and has proven successful to women's advancement in the workplace. In addition, the most promising mentorship programs have found that it is vital for mentors to be other women, not men (Swhartz, 1992; Auberdene & Naisbitt, 1992). There is a need to study such emerging mentorship efforts and the effects such efforts have on the possible improvement of adolescent female self-esteem and subsequent future success in the workplace.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the self-esteem of adolescent girls participating in a new, optional, pilot course entitled Enabling Visions. Specifically, the

objectives of this study are to determine if involvement in an optional mentoring, self-esteem course (1) had a positive impact on participants' self-esteem, (2) increased participants awareness of women's issues and, (3) resulted in participants' selection of specific pro-active strategies enabling them to get their learning needs m[illegible] in the classroom. In addition, findings of this study will provide recommendations to enhance school efforts in continuing mentoring, self-esteem course development.

Background/Origins of Enabling Visions Course

The large urban school district from which the sample was selected initiated a half time position; The Advisor on Women's Issues four years prior to this study and in the year of this study expanded the position to full time. The person employed in this position was responsible for examining issues of inequity for women staff and students. The first three years of this position focussed on female staff issues. During this time women staff members expressed to The Advisor on Women's Issues their increasing concern with the low self-esteem of girls in the district. They cited possible causes as inequitable treatment of boys and girls in the classroom and in sports related activities, and negative images of young women in the media including images that portray women in chains, in the role of evil witches, and in anorexic states. These conditions were, in the opinion of women staff and The Advisor for Women's

issues, giving young women a distorted view of what they should or should not be.

Although concerns cited above were being expressed in a general manner, it was a specific request that led to a district-wide conference of young women to address issues of self-esteem and the subsequent development and offering of an optional self-esteem, mentoring course for young girls. Women staff members requested funds from The Advisor for Women's Issues to invite a successful female film director to speak to women staff. As a part of this request, the film director would also be invited to speak to girls in a separate forum. This additional forum for girls was suggested as a strategy to address the earlier concerns of women staff regarding the low self-esteem and lack of positive female role models for young women in their district.

A year of planning which included gaining support from the superintendent, area superintendents and area principals resulted in a one day conference for young women entitled Enabling Visions. The film director was the main speaker at this conference which included five to seven girls and two to three teachers from each of thirty-five junior-high schools within the district. Young women spent the day hearing the film director's experiences of inequity during her growing up and early career days. Girls shared concerns

regarding female opportunities in the school and in society and enacted self-designed role plays of inequitable situations and shared possible strategies to combat such situations. Each school team left with the goal of initiating some activity at each individual school to continue efforts to support young women and decrease inequitable situations in their lives.

The principal of one junior high, which is the focus of this study, proposed an optional course for young women to the staff and gained their enthusiasm and support. The principal of the school had a long history of involvement in women's issues in the district and she and her school Coordinator of Curriculum had been invited and served on the planning committee for the district conference. The course, entitled Enabling Visions after the district-wide conference, was approved by the board of school trustees in the spring of 1993. The course was designed on a semester basis, to be offered twice a week for 50 minutes beginning in the fall of 1994. Twenty-one girls self selected the course. Critical components of the course content included: matching each girl with a female mentor in a field of work identified by the girl as a possible future career; information relating to the differences in female and male socialization, review of literature regarding inequitable treatment of girls and boys in the classroom, journal writing, assertiveness activities, examination of portrayal

of women in the media, and development of presentations that participants could share with other students in their school. Instructor for the course was the female Coordinator of Curriculum.

Methods

First, an empirical quasi-experimental design was used to investigate possible cause and effect relationships of self-esteem course instruction and the subsequent development of self-esteem in adolescent girls. Both a treatment group and a control group was administered the Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory (Battle, 1992) prior to and on completion of the course instruction received by the treatment group. A true experimental design requiring random selection of participants in both the treatment and control groups was not possible since the treatment was an optional course offering and participants involved self selected.

Second, the treatment group was interviewed before and after treatment utilizing semi-structured, open ended interview techniques. Interviews of the control group were done as needed to clarify data findings. Interviews were conducted to bring a grounded quality to the inventory findings; i.e., gathering information regarding participants' self perceptions.

Third, triangulation (Slaving, 1992) or different observations supporting the conclusions, was an important concept in this study. Thus, quantitative and qualitative measures were employed to better understand the issues of self-esteem in their full complexity.

Data Source

Participants were students in an urban school district of approximately 94,000 students, in the province of Alberta, Canada. Forty (40) adolescent girls (age 13, 14, and 15; grades 8 and 9) from a junior-high school with a student enrollment of 300 were selected. The school attendance area includes a military base and is categorized as a "high needs" school. Twenty one (21) adolescent girls enrolled in an optional self-esteem, mentoring course composed the treatment group of this study. The control group of 20 adolescent girls from the same junior high who did not select the optional course were randomly selected by administration in order to best represent a cross-section of the student body.

Findings

This paper is a report of the first stage or Part I of this study, limited to the background efforts resulting in the optional course offering and the pre-test or initial interview data from the treatment group, i.e., those who self selected the optional course entitled Enabling Visions.

As the study is ongoing (treatment activities will not be complete until February, 1994) the final quantitative comparisons between the treatment and control group and conclusions and recommendations from both groups are not reported at this time. They will be reported in the second stage or Part II of this study.

Interviews

Qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured, open ended interviews were thematically examined (Slavin, 1992; Battle, 1992). Interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length. Participants were asked ten questions from Battle's (1992) Affective Response Inventory. They were asked the questions I feel _____ (sad, mad, happy, scared, worried, proud, upset, guilty, ashamed, like a failure) when. . . In addition, they were asked to rank the importance of social and peer interactions, school work or academics, and family and parents, in their life. They were asked why they chose the optional class; what they saw as differences in girls' and boys' actions, talk, behaviors; and what strategies they felt they could use to get their needs met in the classroom.

In order to interpret the findings it is useful to review the definition of self-esteem as provided by Battle (1992); self-esteem refers to the perception the individual possesses of her or his own worth. Battle (1992, 1990) expanded this definition to include the concept that self-

esteem represents the culmination of one's inherent makeup and life experiences. He cited James' (1890, sic, as cited in Battle, 1992) definition that self-esteem "is the sum-total of all the person can call his" (p. 3), noting it is a composite of an individual's feelings, hopes, fears, thoughts, and views of who he is, what she is, what he has been, and what she might become. The construct of self-esteem has been generally agreed upon to be comprised of a number of components, (Battle, 1981, 1990; Coopersmith, 1967 as cited in Battle, 1992). Battle suggested that self-esteem can be measured by the Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventory (CFSEI) using general, social, academic, and parent-related components. Each may be defined as follows: general self-esteem is the aspect of self-esteem that refers to individuals' overall perceptions of their worth; social self-esteem is the aspect of self-esteem that refers to individuals' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with peers; academic self-esteem (i.e., school related self-esteem) is the aspect of self-esteem that refers to individuals' perceptions of their ability to succeed academically, and; parent-related self-esteem is the aspect of self-esteem that refers to individuals' perceptions of their status at home-including their subjective perceptions of how their parents or parent-surrogates view them.

Analysis of most of the qualitative interview data clearly related to Battle's components. Thus, findings are reported into three similar themes; social, academic and parent/family comparable to three of Battle's four components. Battle's parent component is expanded to include family relationships as many participants' comments regarding parents most often included siblings and sometimes included extended family. An additional theme of non-academic school activities emerged and is reported as theme four. Data are reported regarding the question of relationships with boys and perceived differences between the talk, actions and behaviors of boys versus girls. Finally data are reported regarding participants' reasons for choosing the optional course and perceived strategies for getting their needs met in the classroom.

Theme #1 Social

A majority of girls reported they were most happy when they could be with their friends; doing things like talking, listening to music, 'sleep overs' at each others' homes, shopping, going to movies and dances, and just being around their friends at school sharing their ideas and thoughts, just 'sharing stuff'.

The girls often reported being sad, mad, upset or worried when things did not go well with their friends. For example, they were sad when they lost friends over disagreements or misunderstandings, and often reported being

mad at 'gossip' about things they said or did with others that they felt were not true. Relationships with others consumed a large portion of their time as indicated by well over 50% of their comments. Many girls reported feeling worried when others said unkind remarks about their dress, school marks or abilities in sports or clubs such as drama. With approximately 75% of the girls' families being in the military, moving to new schools, leaving old friends and re-establishing new friendships were often mentioned as reasons to be sad, scared or worried.

Girls were asked to state which seemed most important in their lives, friends and peers, parents and family, or school work and academics. Friends and peers were listed as the most important and second most important by approximately one-third of the girls. Thus, the quality of social relationships with peers is deemed highly important to both their positive and negative sense of well being.

Girls give a lot of thought to relational issues with peers. Psychologist James Battle (1992) concluded and the AAUW Report (1990) stated that high academic self-esteem is most closely related to overall self-esteem measures. It may be that the high profile of peer relationships is an example of the need to better connect girls to their abilities in school work and improved connections with adults, both teachers and mentors.

Theme #2 Academic

Academics or school related work appeared to have the least importance. When asked which seemed most important in their lives, friends and peers, parents and family or school work and academics, academics was reported as the lowest priority by 52 % with only 9% reporting it as a top priority. However, when asked the question I feel proud when ____, girls were more likely to give a response that related to school work than to anything else in their lives. For example, girls stated they felt proud when they got good marks, accomplished their goal of being on the honors list, getting a better grade in a subject then they had the term before, being selected because of good marks to present flowers to the Queen on her visit to the city, or again because of good marks being asked to lead the school patrol, getting good marks on an exam or finishing well on the end of year term exams.

In addition, school work and academics were noted frequently as reasons they felt worried, upset or like a failure. For example, girls reported being worried they may not do well on a test, upset because they didn't have their homework done on time or had not studied enough, and concerned that they might fail a test or be held back a grade in school. When girls noted negative feelings about school work their comments often related to concern over what their parents might say or do such as limiting time with friends. In addition, a few girls reported concern that

low marks might effect their future career aspirations such as wanting to be a surgeon, or a teacher.

As the most frequent connection between the feeling of pride was to academics, this may suggest, as previously noted in this report, that academics is a critical component to girls' feelings of self-worth. In contest with the statement that school work was one of the most frequent topics mentioned by girls when asked I feel proud when. . . it was found that concern and worry about their future was also clearly connected to academics. The prevalence of pride and concern or worry combine to make the issue of academics a compelling one for young women as they make their way in the current and future worlds.

Theme #3 Parents and Family

Parents and family were of primary importance to the girls and occupied a majority of their concerns. Fifty-two percent of the participants rated parents and family as most important in their lives. As well, 51% of all comments offered related to parent/family as compared to 29% for friends and 21% for academics. Girls most often expressed feeling mad, sad, worried, upset, scared, guilty or happy in relationship to parents and family.

Feeling mad was often related to relationships with both parents and siblings. Two factors may contribute to this finding. First, 67% of the girls lived with one

parent; 57% with their mothers and 10% with their fathers. Of the remaining 33% that lived with both parents many were from military families where the father was frequently absent from home. Second, frequent moving, caused by the military careers of their fathers, was noted by many as making it hard for families to become settled in a new area. Many girls stated their parents made them mad when their parents invoked rules they felt were too strict such as curfew times, amount of chores, or restricting time with friends. For example, one girl stated "my mom is too protective compared to my friends parents". Another girl noted her father was strict with bedtimes, chores and curfew and she said "it's probably because he came from a strict home and works for the military."

As noted earlier, a large number of girls lived in single parent homes. As a result they often have added household responsibilities including care of siblings. Most expressed often feeling angry with their siblings. For example, one girl stated that "when my brother hurts me, punches me and yells at me and throws tantrums I tell my mom and then I get in trouble and not him." Another girl reported in a similar manner when she stated "my older brother bugs me, calls me names, punches me and pulls my hair when we are alone."

Caring for younger siblings causes girls to feel mad. For example, one girl stated that "when I have to baby sit my ten month old brother I tell my eleven year old brother to help me sometimes and he never does." When siblings disagree, more comments were made regarding brothers then sisters. For example, one girl reported that her brother makes her feel mad when his friends are around because "he is territorial and puts me down in front of his friends." Another girl stated that "I get stuck with the responsibilities when mom isn't home and I can't do what I want but my brothers can."

With most girls living in single parent families they are acutely aware of the fragile nature of relationships. Many expressed feeling sad because they could not see their other parent or relatives as often as they would like including siblings that live with the other parent. For example, girls offered the following comments: "my dad doesn't take time to talk with me and I only get to see him twice a year;" "I miss my grandparents and now my grandmother died and I hadn't seen her for three years;" "my sister Becky stays out late and my mom says she may send her to live with our father like she did my brother Jason and I am really sad because my brother Jason and I were very close, I miss him;" "my mom is tired and sick a lot and she yells at me and my dad says she isn't sick and that's the game she played with him before he left." Of the girls living with both parents all but one said they felt sad and

worried when their parents fight because maybe they will get a divorce.

Girls' comments about feeling worried or upset were quite similar to those given for feeling sad. For example, girls commented that: "We may move again, my mom wants to and my dad doesn't. They fight a lot and my dad says he won't move if we do;" "I worry when my mom is late; something bad might have happened to her and I get upset when she doesn't call;" "mom tells me to be home on time and she isn't and she doesn't phone;" "my brother has a kidney disease and I worry when he is sick;" "I worry when my dad and his girlfriend fight when I visit them;" "my grandpa died and now my grandmother is alone;" "I'm upset with my mom because she lets my brother do things like go out and she won't let me;" "I worry when my brother works late that he might get shot when he's walking home;" "I worry a lot when my mom goes away on trips because since I live with my dad I don't see her often and then I don't hear from her."

Feeling scared seemed to be expressed most often by girls when they were left alone by themselves or to care for siblings. For example, one girl stated that "I worry when my mom works late and I watch my brother alone and I used to have my older brother to help me." Other common reasons for feeling scared were expressed by girls regarding walking home alone or being told they may have to move again.

When reporting times when they felt guilty nearly all girls mentioned they felt that way when they told their parents something that wasn't true. For example when they told a lie, and until or unless they corrected the situation they felt guilty. Girls said they didn't always tell the truth about finishing homework, telling where they had been, their marks on tests, skipping school, breaking a window, starting fights with their siblings, or telling something that's not true about someone else. These feelings of guilt expressed by most of the girls appeared to result from fairly normal teenage actions.

Over 50% of the girls mentioned family related matters when asked what made them feel happy, indicating again the importance of parent/family relationships to their lives. Girls reported they felt happy when "mom and dad decided to stay married after talking about separating;" "when I'm with my family;" "when my brother calls me;" "when me and my mom have a good time like playing trivial pursuit;" "when my family goes to a sandy beach or we bike ride;" "when my mom compliments me for my work;" "when we go on family trips and do things together like just sit and talk in family meetings"; "when I do stuff with my mom like going shopping."

As noted earlier the largest percentage of comments were in the area of parent and family and a majority of

girls rated such as most important to their lives. Although there were more comments regarding worries, and concerns a significant number of comments indicated positive, happy feelings between girls and their parents and family.

The high profile of family relationships in the lives of young girls coupled with the fragmentation of their family structures may indicate the need for significant involvement of other adults in girls' lives. Teachers and mentors may give girls the support and feelings of connectedness and self-worth they are seeking.

Theme #4 Non-academic

A small percentage (9%) of the girls discussed emotional responses to primarily sports and one girl to drama circumstances. For example, three girls said they felt like a failure when they didn't make a sports team. Two said they felt proud when they improved in sports, for example, increasing their time in track. Four girls stated they felt either happy or proud when they made the hockey team. One girl felt happy when she joined the drama club.

The low percentage of comments reported regarding non-academic school-related activities which are most often sports related, may well be a function of socialization which often does not encourage girls in these areas (Gilligan, 1982). Involvement in competitive and team oriented sport activities has long been noted as important

to men's ability to succeed in the workplace (Tannen, 1990). Thus, adults both teachers and mentors, trying to increase girls' sense of self worth and ability to succeed in the workplace, might encourage and support girls' involvement in the typically male oriented sports activities.

As noted earlier in this report participants were asked ten questions from Battle's Affective Response Inventory. Four themes emerged from these questions as reported above. Participants were asked an additional four questions. Data from these four questions are reported next.

Question #1 Relationships With Boys

As reported in the literature the gap between boys and girls self-esteem widens most at adolescence. Thus, it might be expected that when girls are asked what makes them feel certain emotions they might offer comments in relationship to boys. However, only 3% of their comments specifically centered around boys with one-half of those comments reported by one participant. This participant attended the district wide Enabling Visions Conference where women's issues were addressed. This may account for her emphasis on comments related to boys.

A cause of the gap in self-esteem between boys and girls may for many girls begin in their families. Specifically, comments reported in relationship to boys were

centered around the inequities girls felt between what their brothers could do that they could not and being put down by their brothers especially in the company of friends. Other specific comments reported by girls in regards to relationships with boys include: "boys tease me and put me down and say I can't play hockey as well as them and since I'm the only girl on the team they think they can't hit me;" "you can't do things as well as me because you're just a woman;" "I'm sometimes afraid to walk down the streets and my mom got me an alarm to carry;" "I sometimes worry when I'm with a boy because they say like just give me a kiss and well. . . "

Girls may not specifically or readily comment on relationships with boys because they are not aware of the inequitable socialization gained through their environment. In our democratic environment, girls believe they have equal opportunity. It may be that until they have experienced inequities in the workplace, in the family household duties and child care responsibilities they will not become open to the disparity of treatment they have received during their youth (Steinham, 1989). Adults, both teachers and mentors, can assist young women in identifying inequitable treatment and subsequently developing strategies to reduce the disparity of opportunity between boys and girls.

Question #2 Differences in the Talk, Actions, Behaviors of Girls Versus Boys.

Few comments were given regarding differences in the actions, talk and behaviors of girls versus boys. A large majority (97%) had no response or stated they didn't see differences. For example, one girl stated flatly "there are no differences; boys and girls dress and act the same." Those who did perceive differences stated that boys fight a bit more than girls. For example, one girl stated that "My brother is more aggressive than me and plays harder and talks louder than me." Other girls reported that boys did not care as much about school work as girls and that boys hardly ever share personal feelings like girls do.

Again, as noted in the data reported from the earlier questions regarding relationships with boys, girls, at this age, appear not to be aware of differences apparent to scholars in the talk, actions and behaviors of adolescents. They do not seem to discriminate between equal and unequal treatment in the classroom.

Since a gap between boys and girls self-esteem is documented in research there is a need to increase girls' awareness of women's issues and develop strategies to get their needs met in the classroom to assist in preparation for a successful future.

Question #3 Reason for Choosing the Optional Course

The intrigue of something new, different and interesting coupled with curiosity and a sense of fun appear to be the primary rationale given by girls for selecting the optional course Enabling Visions. Many girls directly stated that this course was something new, something different. For example, one girl reported "I've never heard of a class like this before. It's new to me. It's different." Others said "It sounded interesting from what the paper said;" "It sounded good when I talked to others who went to the district-wide conference last year."

Other girls wanted to learn more about themselves, their feelings about growing up and discovering what career they might wish to pursue. For example, girls stated that "I want to learn more about myself;" "It will help me learn about my feelings;" "I want to talk about growing up;" "I want to learn more about what I want to be and break job stereotypes;" "It's a pretty neat idea sticking up for women." In contrast to these comments one girl stated she worried that the course might get "carried away and not stick up for men" and that they needed to have a male speaker. Several girls questioned why boys were not included in the course.

The novelty of such a course and the sincere desire on the part of girls to learn more about themselves seemed generally to be the reasons they enrolled. In addition,

girls seemed eager to explore their futures while at the same time cautious to declare that an all girls class as needed. Thus, girls seemed to be unaware of the differential treatment they receive in the classroom which often results in lower expectations, achievement and self-esteem (Sadker & Sadker, 1986).

Question #4 Girls' Strategies to Get Their Needs Met in the Classroom

When asked what strategies they felt they had to get their needs met in the classroom, over one-half of the girls were unable to report one strategy. Those girls that did report strategies listed only four; do my homework, talk to the teacher after school, ask for extra help, or study. The strategies listed appear to be general strategies given by most students. None of the strategies listed indicated an awareness on the part of girls that they may be receiving differential treatment compared to the boys in the classroom. Such differential treatment has been reported in the literature (Sadker & Sadker, 1986: Gilligan, 1982; Tannen, 1992; AAUW,1991; Robertson, 1992; Calgary Board of Education, 1992; Brown-Mikel, & Gilligan, 1992) to include less time from the teacher, less critical feedback and less higher order questioning and more interruption by both the teacher and boys in the classroom. Clearly adults must begin to utilize literature findings to share with girls awareness of women's issues, differential treatment and

develop possible strategies to get their needs met in the classroom.

Implications and Recommendations

As this study is ongoing, and at this point in its early stages, implications and recommendations are limited. First, from the background information and early findings it appears that raising the awareness of women's issues with adults who work with young women is critical to improving the self-esteem of girls and to addressing girls needs in the classroom. Adults who have a foundation in such issues may be successful in gaining school district support to begin self-esteem course offerings for girls. Second, it is recommended that administrators wishing to implement such a course as described in this report: (1) become aware of women's issues and gender literature, (2) gain district-wide support, both official and unoffical, (3) secure site-based support of principal and teachers, (4) grant flexibility in course design, content and delivery to allow for participants' needs and teacher abilities and interests, and (5) incorporate mentoring in the course design. Finally, a critical goal of self-esteem education must be to enable girls to deal effectively with the realities of their lives, particularly in areas related to their future career success. The experiences, strengths, and needs of girls must be considered to provide equity for all our students.

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